

**SYDLING ST NICHOLAS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2024 AT
SYDLING ST NICHOLAS VILLAGE HALL, COMMENCING 7PM**

Present: Cllrs S Shears, A Newman, D Tucker, J Dobbs

Chair: Cllr C Legg

Clerk: Mrs A Crocker

Also present: 1 member of the public and Dorset Cllr Jill Haynes

11.01 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies have been received from Cllr Graham Durack.

11.02 Declarations of pecuniary and other interests

No interests were declared at this stage and no requests for dispensations had been received.

11.03 Minutes of previous meeting

A copy of the minutes had been issued to all members with the agenda. Cllr Shears proposed them to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Tucker and agreed unanimously. The Chair signed the minutes in the presence of the meeting.

11.04 Issues arising from the last meeting not covered by agenda – for report only

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

11.05 Chairman's Report

The issue of dog owners not clearing up after their dogs was raised. This is a constant problem but, recently, seems to have escalated with a child ending up in hospital. Whilst some non-villagers are at fault, there are also many local residents who do not clear up after their dogs. A plea will be put in the Chalk Stream, highlighting the problem and asking dog owners to be more considerate.

ACTION: CLERK

New parish Councillor – The Parish Council has been one member short since Cllr Shell Durack stepped down. The relevant notices have been displayed and we are pleased to say that one person has come forward. As the Council does not meet again until January, Cllr Legg suggested they are offered the role which will then be formalised at the January meeting. This was unanimously agreed.

ACTION: CLLR LEGG

11.06 Democratic discussion period

VE Day commemorations – The Parish Council were asked if anything would be held in the village to commemorate the occasion. The Clerk will forward the information received by other councils to members.

ACTION: CLERK

11.07 Unitary Councilor report

Dorset Council Plan - A copy of Cllr Haynes' October report had been issued with the agenda and the November report forwarded before the meeting. Cllr Haynes expressed concern

regarding the lack of detail on the emerging local plan and the considerable shortfall in the budget. It seems that the rural communities are being marginalized and do not appear at all in the new plan.

Flooding in Sydling St Nicholas - The ditch has been sorted out but one problem remaining is the amount of hemlock dropwater growing alongside the bank. It gets to a certain height and then falls back into the ditch, blocking the water flow. This problem could be solved by a team of volunteers trimming the plant least twice a year.

11.08 To consider the DAPTC AGM on the 23rd November 2024

Unfortunately, no-one will be available to attend the meeting but, in principle, no-one disagreed with the transition to a company limited by guarantee. It was noted that, with the transition, DAPTC proposed to increase the annual subscription by 30%. In the case of Sydling St Nicholas Parish Council, this means an increase of £59. It was generally felt that, despite the increase, the Parish Council does benefit from the Association by way of training and advice and would continue to remain a member.

11.09 Finance

11.09.01 To note the Clerk's National Pay Award

This was duly noted and has been put into effect.

11.09.02 To agree retrospective and current payment approvals

The following payments had been requested:

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------|--------|
| A Newman | Fuel for mower | 27/24 | 27.44 |
| D Green | Expenses | 28/24 | 24.44 |
| Plexis Media | Website subscription | 29/24 | 39.95 |
| D Green | Salary September 24 | 30/24 | 228.00 |
| D Green | Stationery | 31/24 | 20.88 |
| AG Tree Services | Tree work | 32/24 | 360.00 |
| Elite Play | Play area inspection | 33/24 | 52.80 |
| A Banks | Fuel for mower | 34/24 | 26.16 |
| Sydling Village Hall | September 24 hire | 35/24 | 11.00 |
| A Crocker | October 24 salary | 36/24 | 189.05 |
| HMRC | July to October PAYE | 37/24 | 209.20 |
| D Green | Backpay award | 38/24 | 60.60 |
| A Crocker | November 24 salary | 39/24 | 221.72 |
| HMRC | November 24 PAYE | 40/24 | 66.00 |

The total amount requested is £1,537.24.

Cllr Shears proposed the payments are accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Legg and agreed unanimously.

11.09.03 To agree the bank reconciliation and position against budget

A copy of the reports was issued with the agenda. No comments were made or queries raised.

11.09.04 To consider the budget proposal for 2025/2026

A copy of the budget proposal had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. A full copy of the proposal can be found on the Parish Council website. However, the key changes are set out below:

- The playground budget has increased from £1,469 to £2,500 to allow some monies to be built up to cover future replacement costs.
- Subscriptions have been increase by £100 to cover the increase in fees from DAPTC and to take into account any additional subscriptions.
- A separate budget of £500 has been created to cover IT costs e.g. web hosting, email storage fees, etc
- A budget of £75 has been added for audit fees.

All other costs remain the same or have been slightly reduced.

With the above changes, the proposed budget for the year 2025/26 is £11,700 – an increase of £700 or 6.36%. The effect on a Band D property will not be known until the base rates are issued by Dorset Council in December. This will then be confirmed at the January meeting.

Cllr Legg proposed the budget is set at £11,700. This was seconded by Cllr Tucker and agreed unanimously. The budget will be issued to Dorset Council in due course.

11.09.05 To consider a donation to the Church

ACTION: CLERK

As a member of the PCC, Cllr Tucker declared an interest in this item. Members generally felt that precept should not be spent on the Church as over forms of fundraising do take place and are well supported. The Parish Council could assist on those occasions.

11.10 To receive reports on the following matters in the parish and to agree action in response to any proposals:

11.10.01 Planning Applications

P/TRC/2024/05521 St Nicholas Church Lane – information only
T1 Ash – fell; T3 Ash – fell

P/TRC/2024/05450 2 Three Acres
T1 Cherry Blossom – fell; T2 Apple – fell; T3 Ilex – fell – information only

P/TRC/2024/06234 5 Church Hill View – information only
T1 Cotoneaster - fell

P/FUL/2024/01342 Land & Buildings of Cutlers Close
Notification of Appeal

The Parish Council had previously submitted an objection to this application which will be part of the Inspectors report. However, Cllr Shears suggested an additional response is sent, highlighting the issue of sewage. This was not one of the reasons the application had been refused but is of sufficient concern to warrant the additional submission. 3 members were in favour of such a submission, 1 was against. Cllr Shears will draft a response and forward it to the Clerk for onwards submission to the Planning Inspectorate by the 18th November.

ACTION: CLLR SHEARS

11.11 Play Park

The quarterly inspection had been undertaken and a number of minor issues were raised. Cllr Legg has arranged to have some of the rotten timbers replaced and will check on the repairs needed to the gate.

ACTION: CLLR LEGG

11.12 Footpaths

It was noted that a tree branch was becoming a potential hazard on the path alongside East House – the branch has dropped to the extent that it is necessary to duck underneath it to pass. The ownership of the tree will be checked before further action is taken.

The finger post by the stile at the back of the church has been broken and needs to be screwed back in place. Cllr Newman offered to look at this.

ACTION: CLLR NEWMAN

11.13 Highways

Parking along High Street is becoming a serious issue. There have been recent occasions when the school bus could not pass during the week and the bins were not emptied as the lorry could not get through Three Acres. This means a fire engine or ambulance would not have been able to get through had the need arisen. It is appreciated that the road does narrow in place but residents and visitors need to be more considerate about how and where they park. A notice will be put in the Chalk Stream asking people to park more considerately.

11.14 Tree update

ACTION: CLERK

Nothing to report.

11.15 Flooding

This is an on-going issue.

11.16 Correspondence

Nothing further to add.

11.17 Items for the next meeting

Members are reminded to pass any items to the Clerk by the 31st December 2024 for inclusion on the January agenda.

11.18 To agree the date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 13th January 2025, commencing 7pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.20hrs.